

What Is The Ontario Human Rights Commission?

The Ontario Human Rights Commission was created in 1961 to promote and protect the rights of everyone in Ontario, including Aboriginal people, under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The Commission's functions include receiving and settling complaints, inquiring into allegations of discrimination, undertaking research and developing policies and guidelines, as well as public education.

The *Code* says that you have the right to be free from discrimination and harassment at your workplace, in shops, restaurants, public transit, hospitals, schools, apartment buildings or hotels, or as a member of a union or vocational association, to name only a few. The rights of Aboriginal people living on reserve will in some situations fall under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and in others, fall under the Canadian *Human Rights Act*.

What Is Discrimination? What Is Harassment?

Discrimination means unfair treatment because of your ancestry, ethnic origin, colour, race, religion, citizenship, place of origin, sex (including pregnancy or transsexuality), disability (including mental and physical disabilities), age, sexual orientation (two spirited) as well as family or marital status (opposite or same sex partners).

The *Code* also protects individuals who are on social assistance from discrimination in housing. And it provides protection from discrimination in employment for individuals who may have received a pardon for a criminal conviction.

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It includes comments, jokes, name-calling or behaviour or display of pictures that insult or offend you or put you down because of your Aboriginal ancestry or other reasons listed above.

Filing And Mediating Complaints

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can call the Ontario Human Rights Commission to get more information or file a complaint. Our general inquiry line is active during office hours, from Monday to Friday, and is toll-free at 1-800-387-9080. For those with a hearing disability, call our TTY at 1-800-308-5561.

When you contact us, we will explain whether the *Code* applies to your situation and how the complaint procedure works. If your situation could be dealt with better by another community agency or falls under the responsibility of another area of Government such as the Canadian Human Rights Commission or Employment Standards, we can help refer you there as well.

Keep in mind that a complaint should be filed within six months of the last time discrimination occurred.

When you file a complaint, the Commission will first offer to work with you and the person(s) and organization you have filed against, to try to resolve the situation through mediation.

What About Prevention?

Public education is an important part of the Commission's work. The Commission has developed a number of policies and guidelines, including "plain language" pamphlets on a variety of human rights issues. All publications are available on our Web site or they can be mailed to you. You can also request Braille, large print, audio, and electronic formats.

Commission staff also attend and host information sessions and work with employers, landlords, service providers, government and community organizations to promote human rights and responsibilities.



For More Information

Ontario Human Rights Commission

Toll Free: 1-800-387-9080
Fax: (416) 326-9520
TTY: 1-800-308-5561
E-mail: info@ohrc.on.ca
Web site: www.ohrc.on.ca

Canadian Human Rights Commission

Toll Free: 1-888-214-1090
TTY: 1-888-643-3304
Fax: (613) 996-9661
E-mail: info.com@chrc-ccdp.ca
Web site: www.chrc-ccdp.ca

Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto

(in Toronto only)
Telephone: 416 408-3967
E-mail: alst@web.ca
Web site: <http://www.aboriginallegal.ca/>

Legal Aid Ontario

Toll Free: 1-800-668-8258
Fax: (416) 979-8669
E-mail: info@lao.on.ca
Web site: www.legalaid.on.ca

Union of Ontario Indians

Toll Free: (877)702-5200
Fax: (705)497-9135
E-mail: recnip@anishinabek.ca
Web site: www.anishinabek.ca/uo/



 **Tansi
Sekon
Ahneen**